

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

82-4355

SUBJECT: (Optional)

FELO--Our First Year in Review

FROM:

[Redacted]

Coordinator, FELO

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

1 February 1982

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

1.

DC/BSO

2/3/82 *Est*

2.

C/BSO

2/5 *Est*

3.

DD/Special Programs

2/8 *Est*

4.

EA/OP

8 FEB 1982 *Est*

5.

8 FEB 1982

DD/Per

6.

7.

A Director of Personnel

9 FEB 1982

(3)

8.

9.

10.

Executive Director

11.

12.

O/P (58-58)

13.

14.

15.

Although many have been very helpful to FELO in its development and initial year's operation, a few individuals deserve to be singled out as having been especially responsive and supportive to our efforts. Our very special thanks go to the following:

Mr. John McMahon, Exec. Dir

A good report.
Est

Quite thorough 19 Feb 82
10 - John: In view of your strong support for the program, I thought you would find this report interesting.

Executive Registry

82-0387

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82-4355

30 January 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

THRU : Deputy Director for Special Programs
Chief, Benefits and Services DivisionFROM :
Coordinator, Family and Employee Liaison OfficeSUBJECT : Family and Employee Liaison Office (FELO)--
Our First Year in Review

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1. The Family and Employee Liaison Office (FELO) officially opened its doors on 26 January 1981 but I believe it appropriate that this report review the initial background which led to the inception and development of the office in order to properly appreciate its functional capacity.

2. In October 1979, the Federal Women's Program Board completed a well-documented study recommending establishment of an Agency Family Liaison Office as had already been successfully accomplished by the State Department and the Agency's Office of Communications. The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence formally approved establishment of the office on 19 December 1979. Subsequently Agency-wide vacancy announcements for staffing the office drew an overwhelming response from which the office's staff of two was selected in June 1980.

3. The succeeding six months found the staff involved primarily in research/retrieval/informational activities. This encompassed, but was not limited to, the following:

a. Establishment of Focal Point Officers: The staff received numerous in-depth in-house briefings from the Agency's "service" functions, primarily under Benefits and Services Division, but also including the Offices of Security, Finance, Medical Services, Training and Education, General Counsel, FBIS, and the Office of

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Communications' Family Information Center, as well as others. Focal Point Officers were established in each of these areas in order to tap their expertise should the occasion arise.

b. Outside Liaison Contacts: The staff then expanded their horizons to include liaison contacts with the State Department's Family Liaison Office (FLO), the FSI/Overseas Briefing Center (FSI/OBC), the USAID Training Office, the Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW) and the AAFSW Housing Office at the Department, the Department's Overseas Schools Advisory Council, and the Pentagon's Joint Armed Forces Housing Unit, all of whom were most cooperative and supportive of our efforts and provided much of the initial data base for the new endeavor.

c. Training Courses: To familiarize themselves with content, during this initial period the staff also audited the various training courses available to spouses under the auspices of the Office of Training and Education (OTE) and the FSI/Overseas Briefing Center (FSI/OBC). An outline of the courses and our critiques are attached as an Addendum. We have found that all the courses are undersubscribed primarily because the spouse does not know that they are available. As a result as an integral part of our briefings, we inform spouses of their existence, strongly encourage their attendance and have met with most enthusiastic response. These are all excellent courses and we believe it not only in the Agency's best interest but the employee's and his family's that management take a positive posture in ensuring that dependents are well aware of and are enrolled in these courses as appropriate.

d. Information Retrieval:

(1) Our first exercise in retrieving information was aimed at combing each of the DO Divisions' Personnel Office's post briefing files for current information. Results from this exercise resulted in a mixed draw of poor to excellent material.

(2) As mentioned in paragraph 3b above, our outside liaison contacts were also most generous in supplying us our initial data base.

(a) We have commercial temporary housing lists for DC, Maryland and Virginia which represent a consolidation of housing information we have received from OC, the Pentagon and AAFSW Housing Offices and independent research. However, these accommodations

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represent no "bargain rates" and with inflation, it is extremely difficult to keep up with current rate increases but it can provide a convenient "shopping list" with comparable rates indicated. This list would be helpful to anyone who is visiting the area under per diem or on TLA before or after returning from overseas. (See also paragraph 5c(2) below on the subject of temporary/low-cost housing.)

(b) Background research and meetings at the Department's Overseas Schools Advisory Council and with the FLO Educational Counselor has provided us with extensive material on education, both in the Metropolitan area and abroad. We are able to assist personnel with information on DOD schools abroad, boarding schools nationwide, correspondence study for elementary, intermediate and high school, college and graduate level, public and private school curriculum and programs in the Metropolitan area, as well as for those schools which are State Department-assisted overseas. In collating this material, it also became apparent that we had accumulated a variety of information on educational facilities for the learning disabled. We have further researched this particular area of education and have identified some 21 countries which have some form of facilities capable of dealing with various levels of learning disabilities. When the material is finally synthesized into a useful format, we will make it available to interested offices and personnel. Special education needs will continue to be a difficult area that will still need to be handled on a case-by-case basis with direct contact with the field a prerequisite to final assignment. The report, however, will provide individuals with at least a basis for seeking assignments to posts that can possibly meet their individual special educational needs.

(c) In the area of spouse employment, our efforts to accumulate substantive information has been disappointing. The Department's FLO Career Counselor has provided us an informal list of posts worldwide indicating those countries that do or do not require work permits which is helpful. FLO has also been instrumental in negotiating seven bilateral work agreements to date (UK, Canada, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, France and Bolivia) and a number more are in process of negotiation. There are also reciprocal agreements already established with Bangladesh, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Australia, Egypt, Germany and Costa Rica. However, professionals who require licensing may still face specific licensing requirements and restrictions of the host country whether a reciprocal or bilateral agreement exists or a work permit is obtainable. In addition, the FLO also has a computerized "Skills Bank" but its practicality to date has been negligible due to work permit restrictions. However, with

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finally be more realistic. The Department also sponsors functional training for spouses who have identified openings and are guaranteed employment at their post of assignment in the fields of General Services Budget and Fiscal or Consular Services. [REDACTED] 25X1

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spouses. At those posts where there is a military presence, there is also the possibility of applying for secretarial positions at the local bases and for those with teaching degrees, there is the possibility of teaching at the local school. However, little in the private sector can be accomplished until after arrival at post. The foregoing review readily indicates that employment [REDACTED] is difficult-- 25X1

very much a case of being in the right place at the right time.

(d) In the area of visual aids support, we have an on-going exchange of material established with FSI/OBC for videos, with OC/FIC for videos, slides and photographs, and with the USAID Training Office for the loan of videos from their library. Our most fruitful relationship, however, has been with the NPIC Ground Photo Branch where we have been able to obtain a wealth of current black and white photography of posts worldwide which, combined with the other visuals, has enabled us to achieve near complete photographic coverage of all posts worldwide. These latter photographs are general in nature, however, and our clientele has evidenced a great deal of interest in more specific photography which includes such items as school facilities (the children especially appreciate this coverage), typical shopping facilities, and most particularly typical housing, not only exterior but interior scenes picturing generally issued furnishings. This type of coverage, therefore, can only originate at the specific posts.

(e) While the staff worked at collecting information in the Headquarters area, most of the field stations were advised of the inauguration of the office and their assistance was solicited in furnishing pertinent briefing material, including individual post "Welcome Kits." A suggestion that spouses also include commentary on life at post, things to include or exclude from shipments, etc., was also picked up on by many posts and has proven to be most helpful to new assignees. The response to the field request has provided FELO with an impressive collection of information; however, in most cases, the request for pertinent photographic coverage was not met.

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e. Collation: Our final and most mechanical exercise was to review, consolidate and collate the wide range of all-source material we had been able to gather. We opted to file the unclassified information in free-standing plastic file boxes on open shelves while separate post files on the scanty amount of classified information are secured in a safe. Except for handouts, most of the information is available only as single copy; however, FELO reproduces any unclassified information visitors may wish to take home for their retention.

4. Physical Layout:

a. FELO occupies a bright and cheerful office in Room 312, Ames Building. The main entry door is protected by a cypher lock (which remains open while the office is manned) and is of excellent size; its space having been previously partitioned to include a separate office within the main office area, an attractive feature. The cypher lock serves a dual purpose in not only limiting access to the room when it is unmanned and thereby restricting access to the myriad of open-shelf unclassified information which has been assembled but also serves as protective security for the slide and video equipment and answering device installed in the office.

b. While not perhaps the most ideal location for parking purposes, its location is readily accessible by the shuttle, public bus and metro subway and is convenient to dependents visiting Ames

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c. The office is serviced by three separate telephone services, ie., a black line [] the new [] and []

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d. The space currently occupied by FELO has been adequate for its initial year of service. However, with the strong DDO support currently evidenced and resultant increase in walk-in visitors, it may be necessary to expand the facility. I believe this could be

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accomplished relatively simply by absorbing an adjacent office (Room 311--currently utilized sporadically by security guards). At the same time procurement of an additional Caramate slide projector and an additional one or two reference table sets for use in the expanded facility would also be judicious. Our current book shelf space is almost totally allocated; however, there is a long outstanding requisition for additional units still pending.

5. Office Functions:

a. FELO represents what would most closely resemble a consolidation of the services offered by the Department's Family Liaison Office (staff of [] and the FSI/Overseas Briefing Center (staff of []). However, we pride ourselves in offering perhaps more tailored and personalized service by not only meeting our clients' needs in the area of post familiarization but providing [] background information, applicable Agency support information, and counseling.

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b. Overseas Preparation: Our primary function is to assist/prepare employees and their dependents for overseas assignment. In accomplishing this goal, we provide one-on-one briefings in order to identify any specific areas of concern. Our visitors are given the specific post unclassified files to review as well as access to the classified OC Brief Post Report from which they may take notes, and are shown the applicable visuals available.

(1) There are a wide range of handouts which are also available to the individuals which include the following:

- (a) Baggage/Air Travel Info
- (b) Calling Card Usage
- (c) Catalogues/Mail Order Listings
- (d) Consumable Allowance Suppliers
- (e) Cross Cultural/Culture Shock
- (f) First Tour Information
- (g) Food and Drink Practices Related to Religious Groups
- (h) Household Help
- (i) Insurance Information
- (j) Pet Shipment Guidance
- (k) Pouch Instructions
- (l) General and Specific Power of Attorney forms with guidance from OGC on their use.

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- (m) Re-Entry Guidance
- (n) Vehicle Information
- (o) Wills (Background Information)
- (p) Foreign Service Assignment Notebook) State
- (q) Washington Assignment Notebook) Department
- (r) Evacuation Plan . . .) publications

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(2) If there is an indication of any medical concerns in going overseas or available at post, we have arranged for [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] DC/OMS/Clinical Activities Division, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] to meet with the [REDACTED]

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individuals for one-on-one briefings/consultations. In addition, we have further proposed to OMS that they provide country (or area) specific medical briefings to all employees and dependents destined overseas as most families depart with minimal knowledge of health and medical support available in the country of assignment. Initial discussions on this proposal have met with favorable response from OMS, the mechanics of such a program remaining to be worked out.

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(3) We outline the training courses available to spouses under the auspices of OTE and [REDACTED] and make recommendations for enrollment in courses if timing and circumstances permit. [REDACTED]

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(4) If we do not have specific information on a particular subject immediately on hand, we will seek it out and relay it back to the individual. We have also been able to keep track of various assignments and if we receive new supplementary information after the initial briefings, we also inform them that additional information is available for their review.

(5) We also provide assistance in direct response to requests from individuals in the field. This is an area we expect will further expand as individuals learn this service is available to them.

(6) A very valuable source of current information regarding life at post is obtained from debriefing personnel newly returning from overseas. We also appreciate their reviewing our information for current validity, ask for supplemental data and any visuals they may be able to provide. At the same time, we solicit their assistance as a "post referent" for new assignees to the post. This ability to contact newly returned individuals for first hand information has proven to be very popular. However, there is no formal mechanism to ensure we will see each individual upon his/her return so we do miss the opportunity many times to make full use of this ready source.

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(7) To help assist overseas families in preparing for return to the U. S. for a domestic assignment or on home leave, we will shortly forward to the field a "Re-Entry Packet" which will contain information on Metropolitan issues of interest, e.g., status of I-66 and Metro openings, realty information, food and sales information (as contained in a Washington Post), as well as helpful guidance in dealing with "re-entry shock" for the family and, in particular, recognizing problems faced by the adolescent upon return to the U. S.

c. Re-Entry/Resettlement: As a complement to the services available to those going overseas we are also able to provide assistance in the re-entry/resettlement process. However, we find most families returning from overseas to assignments in the Metropolitan area are familiar with the area, already have their own homes, and apparently have little need for our assistance. The primary usage for this type service, therefore, comes instead from the new employees and families moving into the Metropolitan area.

(1) We are able to assist these individuals with local schooling information, limited child care information, county services referrals, and some spouse employment information. Our general re-entry/resettlement program has not been expanded more fully because of lack of feedback indicating problem/interest areas.

(2) The major need of individuals coming into the area, however, has been identified as housing. Unlike the newly returning employees and families from overseas, outside-the-area hires receive no TLA to assist them in the resettlement process. Their immediate need is to identify low-cost temporary lodging until they are able to locate permanent housing. As a result in November 1981 FELO expanded its temporary/low-cost housing program in an attempt to meet these needs. The response to our Employee Bulletin for listings was overwhelming and has enabled us to provide more helpful assistance. Most of our listings are from overt employees or non-Agency individuals and caters more toward the female employee. Understandably our most popular listings are those in the McLean area and those located inside the Beltway which are serviced by public transportation, particularly to Headquarters Building. Our office currently averages at least two inquiries per day concerning housing. With the economy in its slump and inflation on the rise, this promises to become an even greater problem area, particularly for our lower graded clericals and young professional families. However, FELO has neither the staff nor resources to become further involved in the low-cost/temporary housing area. In view of

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the exhibited need and response to our superficial assistance in this area, we believe it will be necessary for the Agency to become further involved in providing more expanded low-cost/temporary housing assistance in the future.

d. Briefings:

(1) FELO regularly contribute(d/s) to the following:

- (a) EOD Groups, excluding CT's
- (b) CT Wives Orientation at CofC (irregularly)
- (c) Overseas Orientation
- (d) Ops Orientation for Spouses
- (e) Field Administration
- (f) COS Seminar
- (g) DO/Clerical Orientation
- (h) CT Spouse Open House [] (irregularly)
- (i) []

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(2) Our participation in these briefings does not interfere with our normal functioning and has proven to be very helpful in attracting individuals, who were previously unaware of our office and its many services, to visit us. This, combined with word-of-mouth feedback from the visits, are slowly catching on and the number of visitors drawn to the office through these avenues are on the definite increase.

(3) In addition to these formal briefings, we brief numerous individual offices throughout the Agency on our many services. Our most fruitful briefing, however, was to the Deputy Director of Operations staff meeting in December 1981. The DDO's indication of support for our office has noticeably impacted on DO personnel visits and calls to the office for assistance. The number of drop-in visitors, particularly of employees during their lunch hour, has also increased significantly.

d. Information/Referral/Counseling: Another area in which we function is in the area of information/referral/counseling. Because of our previous personal experience and initial background briefings, we have been able to assist individuals seeking general information or providing specific referrals to our previously established Focal Point Officers (see para 3a).

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(1) However, our most important contribution in this area has been made, I believe, in the area of counseling--not professional counseling per se but in providing a sympathetic ear for spouses to vent their concerns and frustrations. It is because of feedback from this area that we have proposed that spouses be provided a general orientation to the Agency and its non-sensitive benefits and support services which impact on their personal lives. You have approved this proposal in principle and the formal implementation of such a program is one of our major goals in the coming year.

(2) It is also within this area that we have been having an increasing number of divorcing or already divorced spouses contact us. Those who are in the process of divorcing are interested in their "rights and entitlements"--there are few--and those who have already been "divorced out" of the Agency are simply looking for a sympathetic ear and to offer their assistance to other spouses who find themselves in the same plight. It is in this area that we provide a buffer as a secure outlet for these women to also vent their pent-up frustrations of having been an Agency wife, some arguing that "employment factors" helped contribute to their divorce. (For your information, the "typical" divorcing spouse in the Foreign Service is a woman of about 55 years of age, who has been married for 25 years and has served at 5 or 6 posts. She has no real job experience, no marketable skills, no job status, no accrued pension, and invariably also has custody of the children.) I believe the Agency has been extremely lucky to date that none of these women, most of whom are unencumbered with a Secrecy Agreement, have "gone public," resulting in a tremendous breach of security. This is a sensitive area which will have to be recognized and more fully addressed by the Agency in the future.

(3) A supplementary service we also provide is keeping in touch and offering our assistance to spouses who are currently in the area under SMA, early return, or medical evacuations. This indication of support from our office has been very well received; however, it is only by chance that we have become aware of those spouses we have assisted as there is no formal mechanism established to automatically notify us of their presence in the U. S.

6. This memorandum then serves to bring you through the early development of the Family and Employee Liaison Office, our first year of operation, and gives you wide brush coverage of the many

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services we are equipped to provide. It has only outlined our embryonic beginning and by no means closes the parameters of our functional capabilities in the future. Essential elements of the office are flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the Agency, its employees and their families and it is this very versatility that will dictate its course in the future.

7. In closing, our office crosses all Directorates and management lines and support from all to date has been outstanding. It is because of this response that FELO has been such an early success.



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Attachment:
Courses Available to Spouses

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